

Rockford Historic Preservation Commission

April 7, 2009 – 6:00 PM
Conference Room B
Rockford City Hall

Present Laura Bachelder, David Hagney, Mark McInnis, Maureen Flanagan, Tom Graceffa

Absent Doug Mark, Sally Faber

Staff Ginny Gregory

Others David Anderson; LuAnn Groh; Jim Hankins, McClure Engineering; Patrick Zuroske, City of Rockford; Christopher Anderson, Larson & Darby; Dr. Alan Brown, Burpee Museum

Meeting of the Rockford Historic Preservation Commission

Approval of Minutes

Maureen Flanagan made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the minutes for the meeting of March 3, 2009 as submitted. The motion was seconded by David Hagney and **CARRIED** by a vote of 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Certificate of Appropriateness – 225 South Third Street (First Lutheran Church)

David Anderson, Property Committee Chairman for First Lutheran Church, proposed a storage shed adjacent to a kitchen storage area along the alleyway on the church's property. David explained the Church's insurance company notified the church that gas powered equipment could not be stored in part of the church building. Those items are currently stored in a maintenance room attached to the church. In order to prevent the church's insurance from being cancelled, he was looking at a 6'x8' PVC storage shed tucked away in the corner in the least visible location to the outside. The church really has no other area to place the building.

Maureen stated the guidelines require the shed to be made of wood. Accessory buildings can only be placed where they will not be substantially visible from the public right-of-way. The public right-of-way is the alley as well as the street. Ginny explained there really isn't any place the church can put a shed where it isn't visible from the right-of-way. Laura stated the location the church picked was the best location that could be found.

Laura Bachelder asked David if the church considered building a shed out of alternate materials. David replied the church did look at making the shed adjacent to the church a fire-resistant area separated from the church but was cost prohibitive.

Mark McInnis asked if the church considered making a fire separation between the church and the storage building. David replied there were two enclosed windows on the inside of the existing storage area with ceramic tile backing it which makes it difficult to work with. He also mentioned the roof structure would also need to be replaced and separated from the rest of the church. Mark asked if there was a fire suppression sprinkler in the main building. David replied

there was not. Mark asked if the hood on the roof served the kitchen. David replied it was at one point but has now been closed off.

David Hagney asked if the church was concerned someone might get into the shed. David Anderson replied the church had a shed at one time which was vandalized a few times. The shed being proposed has tamper resistant entrance ways.

Mark asked if a 6'x8' shed would be large enough. David replied it would fit all their equipment. He also mentioned he didn't want to get something too large as it would lose more landscaping as they tried to fit the shed in, and may end up losing a yew tree to fit the proposed shed in. If the yew was in the way the church plans on attempting to relocate it. Mark asked if the current maintenance area contained all the church's equipment. David replied it was general storage for the entire church. Mark asked if there was a way to wall a portion off and make it fireproof. David replied when opening the door to the storage area there is a ramp covering some stairs going down to the basement level.

Mark stated he would prefer not to see the addition in plastic but if that was necessary perhaps the color could be a dark brown or gray, something neutral that would blend into the background. Mark asked if the proposed shed could be a temporary solution until the church had the finances to construct something more fitting with the historical neighborhood. David didn't think the church would ever have the finances to construct something permanent. Mark asked if the church had looked into the cost of building the shed out of wood as opposed to vinyl. Laura mentioned Lowe's Hardware has some wood framed storage sheds. David indicated the church did look at the wooden sheds and they were approximately the same price. The reason the church preferred the vinyl shed was because it was more maintenance-free and the wooden sheds do not have tamper resistant latches. Laura stated she would prefer a wooden shed if there wasn't a cost issue. Mark asked if the wooden shed could be retrofitted with a tamper resistant lock. David didn't know if it could.

Mark asked how much the shed cost. David replied approximately \$1,200 with installation another \$400.

David Hagney asked if the shed could be tucked farther back and a fence placed around it. He thought that would help with security. David Anderson replied it would cost the church more landscaping to do that and there was a window that went to the ground in the way from the main church. David Anderson also mentioned the church has a problem with vagrants sleeping in the bushes around the church in that area. He worried adding a fence would further screen and enable them to sleep around the church.

Laura believed allowing the vinyl shed for the church would place this Commission in an awkward position in the future with other applicants. She believed that left two options; placing a fence around the shed much like they have with their dumpster, or having the Church purchase a wooden shed if there wasn't a cost issue. Mark preferred a wooden shed and asked if it was possible to construct the shed in two parking spots with a wooden fence around it. Ginny stated the parking lot is where City employee's park and the lot was pretty full during the week. David Anderson suggested the Church could look for a darker vinyl that would closer match the church.

Mark McInnis made a **MOTION** to **DENY** the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness because of the inappropriate material (vinyl) and request the Church to resubmit an application

for a wood storage shed. The motion was seconded by Tom Graceffa. Following a brief discussion, Mark amended his **MOTION** to **LAY OVER** the Certificate of Appropriateness so First Lutheran can research wooden structures rather than vinyl. The amended motion was seconded by Maureen Flanagan and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

Certificate of Appropriateness –946 North Second Street (Community Foundation of Northern Illinois)

LuAnn Groh, representing Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, requested the Commission to extend the Certificate of Appropriateness that was issued in October 2008 for reconstruction of the center balcony on the west side of the building. The contractor hired can not begin until the middle of May and the original Certificate has expired.

LuAnn stated the property at 946 North Second Street was placed on the National Register listing and the Community Foundation would like to place a plaque stating this on the property but not mount it on the building. The Foundation would like to move a boulder, currently residing in the back of the property, to the new pathway and place the plaque on the boulder.

Maureen Flanagan made a **MOTION** to **RENEW** the Certificate of Appropriateness issued in October 2008. The motion was seconded by Mark McInnis and **CARRIED** by a vote of **4-0**. David Hagney abstained as architect for the project.

Tom Graceffa made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** mounting the plaque on the existing boulder and moving the boulder to the appropriate location with associated landscaping. The motion was seconded by Maureen Flanagan and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

Certificate of Appropriateness – 1500 Charles Street (Lincoln Middle School)

Todd Schmidt, Facilities Manager for the Rockford School District, stated they would like to replace the marquee currently residing in front of Lincoln with a more sophisticated marquee with a digital LED dual-sided sign and the Lincoln motto at the bottom. It was the school's belief the newer sign would aid communication with parents and with emergency notifications. The signs would be controlled centrally by the School District Administration.

David Hagney made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the sign. The motion was seconded by Maureen Flanagan and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

Certificate of Appropriateness – Riverwalk

Jim Hankins of McClure Engineering spoke on behalf of the City of Rockford. He showed the Commission the concept plan for Riverwalk and mentioned there were pictures with the packets that were handed out. The City proposed a sidewalk starting at Park Avenue and extending to Whitman Street with a loop around the Burpee Museum Campus. Jim explained the sidewalk will pass through the following historic areas: Burpee Museum of Natural History, National Guard Armory, Indian Terrace Historic District, including Beattie Park.

Jim stated the sidewalk along Main Street along Beattie Park will be visible from the right-of-way but the remainder of the path would not be visible from the right-of-way. Ginny pointed out the river counts as right-of-way. From the river along Park Avenue in front of the Hinshaw Culbertson

office and the parking garage, the existing sidewalk will remain with the exception of improved handicap ramps.

Some of the sidewalk changes will require adding a small retaining wall so that the proposed sidewalk will match the existing curb line. The wall will be made of limestone or keystone block. David asked if the sidewalk will overtake some of the existing grass. Jim stated it would. Mark asked if it was possible to use real stone along the river. Jim asked if he was referring to something like what was on Alpine and Charles. Mark replied he was.

Jim stated some of the proposed sidewalk changes will encounter grade changes. The City proposes to replace the existing crumbling steps and sidewalk in front of the Armory. Mark asked if the new sidewalk will be made of concrete. Jim replied it would. The new sidewalk will also match the curb line, something the existing sidewalk does not. Laura asked if more steps would be added. Jim replied they would be. Mark asked what the largest walls would be. Jim replied the largest would probably be four feet in front of the apartments and the church. Mark asked Jim to consider using real stone. Jim replied for the most part the walls would not be higher than 18". Mark believed the cost of real stone was slightly more but could be placed as fast or faster than concrete stone.

In one instance the retaining wall along the sidewalk is made of railroad ties, something the City hopes to replace.

Tom asked if the proposed sidewalk will be lower than the existing sidewalk. Jim replied it would be up to a foot lower in some places.

Jim explained the entrance into the Discovery Center parking lot is currently closed off next to the Armory and the City proposed to open it again. The entrance will be rebuilt by taking some parking from the Discovery Center in the back. Ginny asked if the Park District had approved re-opening the parking lot at this location. He indicated that they had.

Jim explained the Art Museum will keep its landscaping in the front and the entrance into Burpee will remain the same. The loop part of Riverwalk begins on the north side of the Armory, continues eastward towards the river, then returns to the Main Street sidewalk up on the north side of Burpee. The sidewalk will continue to the crosswalk and bus stop before jumping to the spur area which comes down alongside the retaining wall with parking next to it. This area is where new lighting will be placed, but the exact fixture hasn't been determined yet.

Jim pointed out the green area he shaded on the plans. He explained the area was currently asphalt parking but will be turned into green space. Continuing on the plan, Jim stated there were circular areas of the path acting as lookouts over the river where another retaining wall will be placed. Jim stated these retaining walls were actual structural walls and would be much larger than the retaining wall placed at Burpee.

Jim stated there would be steps going up to the back of the Discovery Center addition. The walkway near it would be a suspended bridge with a deck painted black. Patrick Zuroske mentioned the color of the deck hadn't been decided yet. There would be another lookout at the start of the Burpee Museum property. Behind Burpee is a patio area being installed as part of the Museum's project. The path will split at this point and meet at grade at the end of the boathouse. The sidewalk in front of the boathouse will be reworked for pedestrian access. The walk then widens at the request of Burpee Museum, which asked that it be large enough to fit a

truck for deliveries. After the boathouse, the sidewalk shrinks back to the 10' width. The bituminous drive underneath the carport will be replaced with concrete before heading back up to Main Street.

Jim stated the landscaping on the plan was a little out of date but would be similar to the master plan.

The proposed lighting would be periodic lighting suitable for a bike path. The pavement material would be concrete. The retaining walls would be concrete made to look like stone. Maureen asked if the entire path would be lighted. Jim replied it would with the exception of Main Street, which will continue to use the existing lighting. Patrick stated the City plans on a larger lighting project to replace all the lighting as a separate project later on which would also address the utilities. Patrick stated there was debate on whether to use the type of lighting used along Harrison or continue the downtown lighting or some other lighting type. He suggested community involvement in this decision.

Ginny asked when actual construction may take place. Patrick believed it could happen spring of 2010. Ginny stated anything approved now would have to be re-submitted again as all certificates of appropriateness are only good through six months. Jim explained the City received a conditional letter of approval from the State Historic Preservation Agency but was seeking a final approval which requires the City to obtain a certificate of appropriateness from this Commission. David clarified before the City begins construction they will need to return for an extension of the Certificate of Appropriateness. Ginny stated the City would need to return anyway as there were no specific lighting plans and there wasn't a specific bridge design. Jim explained he was seeking approval or conditional approval based on what was shown in the plan so the City could move toward final permits and plans through a variety of state agencies. Jim explained the City would return in six months or so with final plans.

Patrick stated the bridges shown in the plans are the bridges that would be used. Some of the railings or possibly the paint used may differ, but the design is the final bridge design. Maureen asked if the bridges had been approved by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). Patrick replied IHPA conditionally approved the path, not the bridges. Patrick explained these master plans had been approved by Burpee Museum, Rockford Park District, Discovery Center and Riverfront Museum Park. He further stated the City was working on an intergovernmental agreement with Rockford Park District and Burpee Museum.

Mark expressed concern over the style of the bridge. He believed they were too modern for the area. Jim explained this style bridge was chosen because it most closely represents the Jefferson Street Bridge which is visible from the Riverwalk. Patrick explained there were three different design charettes including one with the Indian Terrace neighborhood. He stated one thing he heard at all public meetings was the desire for something really unique along the Riverwalk. Patrick believed the thrust arch bridge would fit that desire and be economical at the same time.

Mark mentioned he would prefer something more classic looking for the bridge rather than matching the Jefferson Street Bridge. He did believe the arch was appropriate.

David Hagney made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the conceptual design as presented. The motion was seconded by Maureen Flanagan and **CARRIED** by a vote of **5-0**.

OLD BUSINESS

Certificate of Appropriateness – 737 North Main Street

Chris Anderson from Larson & Darby represented Burpee Museum regarding the west elevation addition to Burpee Museum. During the March Commission meeting, comments regarding the west elevation indicated the addition was too plain and the Commission wanted to see a couple of other options, including some of the banding located on the existing Solem Wing.

Chris indicated the first redesign option carries the banding across from the Solem Wing to the proposed addition. The revision also adds a cornice touch similar to the detailing on the Solem Wing which is effectively a soldier of a rock face texture next to a smooth block. This pattern repeats with a cast stone cornice at each corner.

The second redesign option incorporates a large window that will allow light into a stairwell. This design relates to a similar window element on the Solem Wing addition. Chris believes these revisions unify the other additions around the Manny Mansion.

Maureen asked if the window element was truly a window. Chris replied it was, and it lit up a stairwell not the exhibit hall.

Chris also mentioned the proposed additions contain a difference in material. The banding is smooth rock face with bullnose accents and other design elements taken from Solem Wing addition.

Mark asked what the middle protruding feature on the roof was. Chris replied it was a rooftop mechanical unit. Mark asked if it was going to be screened. Chris replied there weren't any plans to screen the unit currently but it could be screened. Chris pointed out the existing rooftop also has a rooftop mechanical unit.

Mark believed the changes were very well done but was concerned with the rooftop mechanical units and wondered if they could be screened. Chris explained the ginkgo tree in the front of the property significantly screens the units. Mark stated the ginkgo tree could eventually come down, and requested the units be screened.

Laura asked what would be used to screen the unit. Chris replied it was generally a painted metal panel. Chris stated the unit was basically a flat unit and wasn't sure it was really necessary to put panels on it. Mark stated the unit would not be square and would have in-take valves showing. He believed a painted panel with shadowing would look much better.

David Hagney made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Certificate of Appropriateness for option 2, with the addition of a screening device for the mechanical unit on the roof. The motion was seconded by Tom Graceffa and **CARRIED** by a vote of **4-0**. [Maureen Flanagan left during the discussion.]

Update on Violations-400 block of Kishwaukee Street

Ginny stated the owner contacted her but failed to e-mail the promised file. She explained the owner was trying to find a way to finance painting the homes. She stated there is a scheduled code hearing on April 15th at which time she will request the next code hearing for this property be either the May first or the June 1st so the timing will coincide with Commission meetings. This way the owner will only need to make one report rather than two separate ones. Ginny mentioned she will still take photos before the May meeting as she did before this one.

Ginny stated that the window that was missing last month has been replaced, although it doesn't look very nice.

Update on Violations-904 North Prospect Street

Ginny stated the vinyl siding on the garage has been removed. Ginny explained the owner said he had ordered the wood for the siding at Menards only to discover Menards had already sold it to someone else. He has re-ordered the wood and it should arrive in three weeks. He also agreed to submit an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the metal doors for next month's Commission meeting.

Tom asked if it was possible to put something on the applications about not applying for anything made with vinyl. Ginny and David pointed out some vinyl materials had been approved.

Staff report

Ginny received a late request from Laurie Gustafson to renew a Certificate of Appropriateness that was approved last year. Ginny explained that Lori had not built the fence that was approved at 623 Grove and wanted to add it now.

David Hagney made a **MOTION** to **EXTEND** the Certificate of Appropriateness approved for the fence at 623 Grove Street. The motion was seconded by Mark McInnis and **CARRIED** by a vote of **4-0**.

Ginny informed the Commission the press conference regarding the Historic booklets last week went very well. Ginny will be presenting the booklet to City Council next Monday, April 13th, 2009. The annual mailing of booklets to all historic property owners will be in May 2009. Ginny mentioned she wanted to discuss options for distributing the booklets to area realtors with Sally Faber. The booklet is also posted on the City's website. Ginny provided information to the National Trust, Landmarks Illinois and NAPC about the booklet.

Ginny pointed out the booklet she distributed at the start of the meeting ("Introducing NAPC") contains legal information necessary for this Commission, so she made copies for all Commission members.

With no further business, David Hagney made a **MOTION** to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mark McInnis and **CARRIED** by a vote of 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25p.m.